



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

### **TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**March 8, 2013**

*Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA, Commissioner, 860-509-7101*

### **Senate Bill 368 - AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO REPORT ON LYME DISEASE AND OTHER TICK-BORNE ILLNESSES.**

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Senate Bill 368 would require the Department of Public Health (DPH) to consult with an advisory board to study Lyme disease and provide a report regarding best practices to prevent, diagnose and treat Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses; and disseminate information to the public and health care providers concerning the prevention and treatment of Lyme disease. The Department feels that this bill is unnecessary and duplicates efforts that have already taken place in the state and on the national level.

The public health approach to Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases is focused on disease prevention. The DPH does not make recommendations concerning the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease. The ultimate decision regarding care of a particular patient should be made by the healthcare provider and patient.

For more than 25 years, three state agencies have provided the people of Connecticut with information about how to prevent tick-borne diseases: the DPH, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Comprehensive materials for the public about the prevention of tick-borne diseases can be found on the websites of these three agencies (<http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3136&q=395590>).

The advisory board created by this bill would unnecessarily duplicate a recently completed review conducted by the Institute of Medicine at the request of the National Institutes of Health and would require additional DPH staffing to implement. The Institute of Medicine held a workshop on October 11-12, 2010, to examine the state of the science in Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases. Speakers discussed current research and knowledge gaps; criteria for diagnosing tick-borne diseases; the groups most vulnerable to acquiring tick-borne diseases; and the experiences of those with tick-borne diseases. The workshop report was released on April 20, 2011 and is available for free online at <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2011/Critical-Needs-and->

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At the DPH, Lyme disease surveillance and prevention activities are funded through two cooperative agreements with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Currently, the department receives \$37,800 in federal funding to support Lyme disease surveillance activities. Additionally, \$446,746 in CDC "TickNET" funding is available in 2013 to implement the following activities: 1) a full scale evaluation of the effectiveness of rodent targeted bait boxes, 2) a study to quantify the role of peridomestic (around the home) exposure in Lyme disease and other tickborne diseases and 3) development of a protocol and study instruments to conduct a future evaluation of the economic burden of Lyme disease.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's view on this bill.